

From
Dance & Doctor.



THE INEVITABLE STEP

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WE are continually being told that we are living in a new day, but it is not very often that we are told just what factors have made this new day. These factors are mainly three: the industrial revolution, the revolution in communications and the consequent growth of our cities. The industrial revolution has completely changed the whole fabric of our industrial and economic life. The revolution in communications has reduced the whole world to a single neighborhood and so has pressed upon us with new force the whole problem of living together. The growth of our cities has shifted the equilibrium of our population from the rural to the urban centers and so has necessitated a redefining of the majority of our social conceptions. All together our society is more closely knit than ever and its problems are more intense and difficult as a result.

In this complex society the political problem of mankind is to combine the three ideals of economic efficiency, social justice and individual liberty into a working social order. Our difficulty is magnified by the fact that while these three ideals are not mutually exclusive they are mutually difficult. Economic efficiency is apt to carry a threat against social values when it puts production above personality. Nor is it always easy to reconcile industrial efficiency with the conservation of individual liberty. He would be a

bold man, also, who would venture to set an exact boundary at which individual liberty ends and social obligations begin.

In this discussion, however, after pointing out that these three problems are upon us I wish to confine myself to indicating how important the prohibition of the liquor traffic is to the solving of each of them. The abolishing of the use of alcohol in the social body is an essential preparation for the solution of the political problem of mankind.

My first point is that prohibition is essential to economic efficiency.

The stress on the necessity of economic efficiency arises out of the fact that while our natural resources are being depleted our population is steadily increasing. Modern science has given us new skill in destroying our resources and new skill in saving life. With less material and more people we have to develop greater efficiency. There are two factors which must be safeguarded: we must use the raw material we have to the limit of its usefulness and we must get all that we consistently can out of the human material involved. Economic efficiency demands that physically and mentally man must be at his best.

Our industrial organization also demands that the capital tied up in machinery shall be made to earn its way. This means that every machine must be worked as long as possible and must produce as much as possible. Thus economic efficiency demands that production shall be increased as much as is practicable. Incidentally the threat of machinery against human welfare will be wiped out if production can be speeded to the point where the working day is shortened. Already we have

reduced the laboring day from fourteen and twelve hours to ten and eight hours. The opportunity for leisure, culture and self-expression in the lives of the laboring classes will be increased in direct proportion to the increase of production. So we may say that economic efficiency looking toward a higher standard of living demands greater production.

An important and growing feature of our economic life is the larger and larger use of credit. Credit is no longer a matter between business organizations. We are developing a system where individuals as such are doing a large share of their buying on credit. One jewelry store in our city of eighty-five thousand has thirteen thousand customers on its books buying goods on credit. So much money is now tied up over the nation in this way that any threat against it might easily produce a financial panic. The bubble of credit, however, will not burst if confidence in the buying power and the honesty of the average consumer can be maintained.

These three things, then, are tied up in the ideal of economic efficiency—man-power, production and credit. The liquor traffic is a threat against economic safety because it weakens men through the poisonous effects of alcohol on body and mind. It stifles production because it keeps the worker away from his machine during the necessary period of recovery from a drunken orgy and also because it increases the labor turn-over. It destroys credit because it shakes confidence in its victims and lessens consumption of other goods. Alcohol saps the economic life-blood of the community. Prohibition is a prerequisite of economic efficiency.

My second point is that prohibition is essential to social justice.

The stress of our day on the necessity for social effectiveness arises out of the simple fact that men are being thrown together more than ever before. This means that we must develop a new technique for living together successfully. Our social organizations are assuming a new importance and our social obligations a new insistence. There are no isolated communities any more. None of us can wrap the cloak of isolation about us and be separate from our fellows, the course of events has thrown us together in one great community of interests. The citizen of the new day must be unselfish and enthusiastic in spirit, having a lively social conscience and and alert social intelligence. Social effectiveness must begin with socially minded individuals.

The simplest social structure is the home. It is the cornerstone of society itself, for without the home our social life could not stand. It is the pattern of society, for in spite of its weaknesses it is the most successful social group man has yet devised. It is the training ground for our social virtues, for the attitudes we take out into the larger society are those we have built up in the home. The home is the strategic center of human relations.

The collection of homes makes the community. Community loyalty and pride is the seed out of which grow the wider loyalties of life. The intensive cultivation of community spirit out of which grows community righteousness is essential to complete social effectiveness. This includes all community good works, including such matters as good

streets and buildings and the larger matters of justice in the dealing of man with man.

When communities come together they form states and nations. The first safeguard of state and nation is integrity. Disintegration begins when righteousness and clean citizenship go. If men are to live together successfully in national groups they must retain confidence in their governments.

These four things, then, are included in the ideal of social effectiveness: socially-minded individuals, safeguarded homes, clean communities and national integrity. The liquor traffic is a social danger because it robs men of social conscience, it is the enemy of the home, its saloons are blots on the community and it corrupts politics and so destroys the confidence of citizens in their governments. The trade in alcohol is not only un-social, it is anti-social. It is the most anti-social traffic we have ever had in human society. Prohibition is a prerequisite of social effectiveness.

My third point is that prohibition is essential to individual liberty.

No ideal is dearer to those who share the Anglo-Saxon tradition than that of individual liberty. It is a privilege we have long sought from Runnymede in 1216 to the present day. The greatest names of our history are the names of those who have given themselves most sacrificially to the cause of human liberty. This ideal is a precious heritage and we cannot afford to let it go.

It is particularly important that we emphasize it in these days of ours, for back of it lies the great truth of the supremacy of human values above all other values. The welfare of man outweighs the profits of indus-

try and is the true motive for society. Democracy is the expression of this ideal in governmental form. If we are to safeguard the passion for liberty, government must be not only of and for but by the people.

The successful working of any democracy demands the keeping alive of the attitude of tolerance. Democracy is government by debate and tolerance is the expression of our faith in the inherent power of truth to vindicate itself. Fanaticism which would choke off freedom of utterance is an enemy of democracy. We cannot live together successfully if we do not recognize and respect differences of opinion and allow them utterance.

Along with tolerance must go a recognition of the profound contribution which can be made to the world only through individuals as individuals. We need in our day, which works so much in masses of men, a new appreciation of the importance of the individual. A man's greatest contribution to society comes not when he is most conventionalized but when he is most himself.

Strangely enough the ideal of individual liberty has been seized on by the enemies of prohibition in the name of the greatest foe individual liberty ever had. The liquor traffic always has been and is today the outstanding enemy of liberty. In the old days of the Bourbons when there was any sign of incipient rebellion the autocrat made his fountains run wine, and when the people were drunk the rebellion subsided. Alcohol was the favorite weapon of the autocrat and by it he kept his people subject. In our American life liquor was the favorite tool of the political boss who established his headquarters in the saloon and held his cohorts in line

by giving them booze. The use of the argument for individual liberty to bolster up the cause of liquor betrays a cynical disregard of the facts of history.

The ideal of individual liberty demands true democracy in government, a spirit of tolerance and appreciation of individuality. The liquor traffic is the sworn foe of democracy, for it has never shown itself amenable to any kind of legal control but has always sought to capture the machinery of government for its own use. In our own day it shows itself to be the enemy of tolerance for the wet crowd are so fanatical that they will not allow even the Constitution of the United States to stand in the way of their own self-satisfaction. They like to call the prohibition forces fanatics, but we have no fanaticism which can compare with theirs, for they are willing to undermine the whole structure of law and order to satisfy a single desire and to maintain a particular idea. Liquor also defeats individuality because it muddies a man's mind, prevents clear thinking and destroys self-control. Alcohol is the sworn foe of individual expression and development. Prohibition is a prerequisite of individual liberty.

Prohibition is not a sudden vagary of thought, it is an inevitable step. It came because it was time for it to come in the development of society. It is essential in our modern world to the solution of the political problem of mankind. We have many opponents, but prohibition cannot fail because it is backed by the course of events.